

HOW I KILLED A CARIBOO.

TO THE BARRENS.

IT was the morning of the last day of the year; the hands of the clock were indicating half-past five, and the quicksilver of the thermometer twenty-five degrees below zero; when I, Anaxagoras Linstock, tourist and philosopher, left Fredericton, in New Brunswick, in the following miscellaneous company: a Red Indian; twelve pounds of similarly-coloured beef, eight of pork, sixteen of biscuit, one of tea, and six of sugar; one gallon of brandy, tins of mustard, pepper, and salt; forty potatoes and as many onions; a frying-pan, a tin kettle, and two 'tots' or tin cups; a rifle, a fowling-piece, and ammunition; lucifer matches, snow shoes, tomahawks; a sled and pair, and Will Doherty the driver. Our destination was a tract some thirty miles distant through the bush, called 'the Cain's River Barrens;' and our object to spend six days, which I had to spare, in slaughtering or endeavouring to slaughter one or more of the Cariboo which therein do congregate.

Now perhaps I should premise, for the benefit of the uninitiated, that a Cariboo is *not* the same as a Caribee, and that I was *not* purposing to prove any of the *entente cordiale* which I may have felt for my Indian ally by aiding him in a bloodthirsty expedition against a hostile tribe. I was as yet but an undeveloped Hawkeye, being only in what is, according to Cooper, a

preliminary stage of the character, that of Deerslayer; and my thirst was but for the blood of the Reindeer of North America, the *Taran-dus* of Buffon and Cuvier, commonly called the Cariboo.

Let me introduce my Indian—Awahwas, or 'The Wild Goose,' named probably from some youthful frivolities. He is of the blood royal of the Meleceets, and heir-presumptive to the dignity of the 'Sargum,' or chief; a lineal descendant of the ancient Delaware dynasty, of which tribe the Meleceets are an offshoot; and I take Uncas and Chingachgook, immortalized by Cooper, to have belonged to but a junior branch of his royal race. Awahwas, however, is a good Catholic, and his god-fathers and godmothers gave him a new name in his baptism. These functionaries seem to have been selected in equal measure from representatives of each language prevalent in those parts, French, English, and Indian; and two names only being orthodox, to have settled their three contending claims of nomenclature by distorting into 'Susep Plançois,' what in plain English is Joseph Francis. Joe, as he is always called, is rather a short figure, slim, thin, and wiry, but not ungracefully formed. Every limb gives a hint of the most india-rubber agility, while his face, and a rather disproportionate solidity of chest and shoulder, suggest the somewhat contradictory faculty of dogged and

strong endurance. His gingerbread complexion and particularly ugly features have been cruelly denied by nature the means of hiding any part of them; but wear a composure which would be dignified in spite of ugliness and beardlessness, were it not for the cunning twinkle of his glistening little eye, betokening qualities which are highly pleasant to contemplate as allies against the race of Cariboo, but which one would rather not make enemies of. If one met those eyes in a retired English lane after sunset, one would instinctively make a mental roll-call of one's available resources against garrotte. He is dressed in the invariable blanket-coat of his nation, adorned with many-coloured stripes at the hood and borders, and with red cloth inlaid at the seams; and confined at the waist by a belt supporting a hunting-knife sheathed in moose-hide, and a tomahawk; coarse canvassy continuations lead to terminations of moccasins in colour and consistency like wash-leather; and his cap, once of otter-fur, but now of little more than otter-skin, seems not so warm or so important a part of his head-gear as a confused mass of black hair which hangs from under it to his shoulders, in the style of an unkempt Charles the First. You may travel many a day and through many a land, without seeing a wilder figure than my companion to the Barrens.

Anything equal to the cold of that morning I had never felt. There was a driving, cutting wind with it, which no amount of blanket-coats or buffalo-robos could resist; and we, the three human members of the expedition, were glad to pack ourselves and the inanimate portion of our company into as close a mass as we could on the bottom of the sled, which was simply a long flat wooden tray, mounted on a pair of clumsy wooden skates or runners. For myself, I squeezed my feet under the brandy-pitcher, as the only thing unlikely to freeze, and found the thick woollen vizor of my cap utterly inadequate to prevent a frozen face, till itself froze into a hard consistency impervious to wind, and proved that even ice can sometimes be productive of warmth. Better, however, for this end than

flannel or fur, or even ice, was Will Doherty's never-ceasing stock of songs and anecdotes, and hearty good humour; and the crisp morning air of the woods rang with our duet of music and laughter as we ploughed through the heavy drifts—a duet to which the shrill jingling of the sled-bells and the dull groaning of the runners through their furrows, added a not unpleasant bass and treble *obligato*, but which was seldom augmented into a trio by a sound from Joe, who has with the name dropped the 'wild-goose' propensities, and is now the most taciturn of his taciturn race, gifted with a stoicism which refused to relax into a smile at our most stirring joke, or into more than three pithy words, with at least a semicolon between each, in answer to our most personal appeal.

After narrowly escaping immersion in crossing a river on ice rotten with the snow, we arrive about noon at the hut of the last settler in our direction, whose fold is oftener visited by bears than his hut by man, and who is proportionately excited at our approach. Here the road ends; if indeed an opening through the trees along which we have journeyed so far—freer, it is true, from fallen timber and such obstructions than the rest of the forest, but covered with unbeaten snow varying from two to five or six feet in depth,—can be dignified with the name of road. Will Doherty is to leave us now; so Joe produces our stores, and we give him a parting feast, cut short by his hurry to return to meet his sweetheart at a ball with which the choice spirits of Fredericton are purposing to welcome in the New Year; and even Joe is seduced into something which may be construed into a smile as we drink the last of many stirrup-cups to so inspiring a toast as this information affords us; while Will himself—in language which shows that, whatever may be his ideas of the marriage oath in particular, he has at least studied the nature and variety of oaths in general—vows his determination this very night to take my advice and the opportunity of popping the question.

It was a wonderful change from the laughter and noise of Will's de-

parture to the heavy, silent tramp through the lonely bush, which formed the continuation of our journey. Joe had transferred all our stores to a 'treboggan,' which is to a sled what a wheelbarrow is to a wagon, and was hauling them after him on the snow; while I marched first, to 'make tracks' or beat down the snow with my snow-shoes, so as to give an easier furrow to the treboggan.

It is no easy work, the first attempt to walk on soft, yielding snow, each foot carrying with it its own flooring in shape of a snow-shoe; and I varied the monotony of our first hour's tramp with an occasional frantic head-foremost plunge into the snow, where I would stick fast, in a condition like that of the man who attempted to walk high and dry across a river with corks on his feet, and discovered his mistake by finding himself hanging by his heels perpendicularly into the water. I was painfully conscious of cutting a most ridiculous figure each time that Joe, with a promptitude worthy of the Royal Humane Society's medal, hauled me out of my self-dug grave by the blanket-coat which formed my shroud; but 'ridiculous' is a relative term, and Joe would supply no correlative to it; and I am bound to state that, by word or deed, intentional or unintentional, I never more signally failed in rousing anybody's amusement, than I did in the case of this bronze-visaged savage—bronze in colour and fixedness—for whom Campbell would have altered his description of the Indian Chief, and have written—

A stoic of the woods, a man without a grin.

Such a silence it was! broken only by an occasional report like the crack of a rifle. 'What that noise?' I inquired idiomatically of Joe the first time I heard it. 'Oh! cold, you know; stick; bust,'—which is Joe's way of expressing that some enormous pine has cracked with the frost. It is wonderful what ease and lightness of voice one seems to feel in the general hush and the rarefied air; a sensation of consciousness that one can be heard a mile off, which would be particularly pleasing to a popular

preacher. A squirrel now and then struck in with a chatter; but I think I heard one bird only during the entire week. 'Cheep-wees' is Joe's answer to my inquiry,—'what bird that, Joe?' which word I have since discovered to be simply the Meleceet for 'bird,' so I presume the specimen in question had not been further classified by the naturalists of his tribe.

On we toil all the afternoon in the same order of march, guided only by marks of previous travellers, few and far between, blazed on the trees, and by the sagacity of Joe, who has never been to these hunting grounds before, but who sees an Indian path where I can see nothing but trees and snow. Bets have been laid at Fredericton that we shall never reach the Barrens, but Joe assumes an air of royal superiority in answer to my doubts; still, in spite of his assurance, he is at fault once or twice, and has to leave the treboggan to my hauling, while he makes ingenious casts to hit the road off again.

About twilight Joe suddenly stops, with, 'I guess camp here.' It is a bad place for a night's halt, not being near a brook, but Joe doesn't know where to look for one, so we are fain to reconcile ourselves to the idea of melted snow for our cuisine. Joe selects a spot under two branching pines, whence, with snow-shoes for shovels, we scrape away the snow for a space of about eight feet square, banking it up round the outside: half of this space Joe instructs me to lay with boughs of the red cedar, which are to serve us for carpet, chair, table, and bed, all in one, while the other half is our hearth. Meanwhile he lumbers, or cuts our firewood for the night, felling with his tomahawk about a dozen of the nearest trees, and hewing them into logs about eight feet in length, in which operation I assist when my milder work is done, and am proud of Joe's approval of my dawning proficiency in woodcraft.

But to see Joe lumbering! He throws his tomahawk about his head apparently in the most random and flail-like manner possible, but deals every blow as clean and sure as if he were some thrifty householder carv-

ing a favourite ham. Nay, he occasionally uses his feet as an outline for his cuts, and when some larger pine than ordinary has succumbed to his prowess, stands on his fallen foe with heels together and toes apart, in a dancing-master's first position, and slices out the intermediate angle into a notch, bringing down each blow of his whirling axe within a very few hairbreadths of his moccasins. I shudder to behold; but Joe's nerves are of the temper of his tomahawk, which, at the risk of spoiling the romance of the name, I should state to be a good and unmistakable Sheffield axe-head, with the maker's name not yet ground out; the handle, to be sure, is of wild and original shape, but the weapon is an axe, neither more nor less.

When the trees are cut up, the fire lit, and the logs placed handy for the night, Joe boils our tea, and fries our hodge-podge, and by the time that I have given an additional height to the wall of our camp with a kind of *chevaux-de-frise* woven of the loose branches off the logs, he proclaims 'tea ready.' We feast; smoke the pipe of peace; finish with a nightcap of grog; roll ourselves in our blankets; lay our feet as near as we can to the fire, which Joe has heaped up afresh, and compose ourselves to sleep, our heads in the dim distance under the wall of snow.

I lay awake a long time this first night, musing on my curious situation. Fore was I, many miles from any human being but the wild figure which snored at my side, deliberately choosing to spend one of the coldest nights of a cold climate on a bed of snow (for it was little else), under no shelter but the trees and the stars. The scene was most extraordinary and picturesque. The blazing logs backed by the bank of snow, retreating into icicles scarcely a yard behind them; the fantastic masses of trees, all black and white, which peeped forward into our circle of warm glow; the idea of vast darkness and cold beyond; and blacker and colder than all, the sky seen through the tall gaps above, with stars which stood out even whiter than the snow for being beyond the ruddy influence of the fire:

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who could sleep in a scene so novel and exciting? Besides, I thought, what and if Joe should awake, and take it into his head to appropriate to his royal use guns and other appurtenances for which he has already expressed by word and look the strongest admiration: he has only to use that knife which lies gleaming by his side as expertly on me as I have just seen him use it on smaller meat, and nobody need ever know what has become of me. Moreover, it is not easy to an inexperienced bushranger to accommodate himself to the successive cubic feet of temperature in camp, and I found myself undergoing at once three different climates with their several gradations. One's feet become very torrid indeed at the fire; it is correspondingly frigid in the high latitudes at the head, and an intermediate zone succeeds in achieving a respectably temperate atmosphere. I awoke several times during the week from the pain of scorched feet to find my eyelashes frozen together.

Thus passes the night, 'tween asleep and wake, varied occasionally by rousing Joe to keep up the fire, who lies as inanimate and unresponsive to shouts as one of the logs in waiting beyond him; a poke produces only a drowsy remonstrance of 'bery goot fire,' and it requires a good unmerciful kick or two to rouse him to a due sense of his obligations. I am not sorry when the pale dawn comes crowding in upon our red neighbourhood, though I have never known how much imaginary warmth there lies in darkness till I shudder at the new distances of cold revealed by daylight. Joe is up, and cooking at once; before I perfectly comprehend the whole situation I find myself at breakfast, and by sunrise we are tramping on again.

To-day as yesterday, and yet more fatiguing. We cross some tracks of sable, for which Joe sets traps baited with cold boiled beef, which he soon knocks up with an ingenious collocation of logs and boughs, on the principle of a falling weight to crush the animal. Two or three times to-day Joe stops with 'I guess water.' 'Why, Joe?' 'Oh, ground sink.' I look, but can see

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nothing more than the same unevenness of snow which the buried underwood and fallen timber cause everywhere; but Joe has 'guessed' it, and he is never wrong when he expresses an opinion so strongly as that, so he digs a well in the snow with his axe, and there sure enough is a trickling stream far underneath, which we adulterate with brandy, drink, and proceed on our way rejoicing.

When Joe says he 'thinks' he is mostly wrong; when he 'sposes,' very nearly always right; when he 'guesses' it's gospel, and I should despair of ever reaching the Barrens many times to-day, if Joe were not passing his royal 'guess' that we are right all the time, so I toil on in faith of the *ipse dixit*.

At last, an hour or two before sunset, Joe surprises me by suddenly proclaiming that we are within a mile of the Barrens. He can't tell me how he knows; I don't believe he knows how he knows himself; he 'guesses' it. 'This,' he says, 'goot place camp: if camp too near Barrens, scare Caliboo.' I am not without my suspicions that Joe thinks that he has had enough of the treboggan for to-day; but I defer to his judgment, so we go through yesterday evening's process over again, making this camp, however, rather more elaborate and comfortable than the last, as we are to spend four nights in it, and roofing the side which is not fire with about a dozen planks, which Joe, with no weapon but his axe, cuts and splits in about half-an-hour out of the side of a large pine.

All our stores are hard frozen to-night, and meat, potatoes, and onions have to be chopped with an axe, and stay a long time in the frying-pan before they will begin to cook; but Joe's resources rise with difficulties, and our new-year's dinner is the best I ever tasted. And don't we relish and scramble for the tid-bits of the hodge-podge which Joe serves up fresh from the fire in the frying-pan, which is our only dish and plate! And don't our hunting knives—for we are guiltless of forks—go quickly backwards and forwards from the pan to our mouths, bearing on them the delicious mixture of pork, beef, biscuit, potatoes,

onions, grease, and dirt, which, with creamless tea, forms the orthodox camping diet. The greatest contest is for the grease remaining at the end, which we soak up with biscuit, or scrape up with knife, according to its consistency. Verily camping makes one acquainted with strange trencher-men, and stranger trenchers.

Joe is less stolid to-night over our grog and pipes, and tells not very interesting stories of his former haunts and prowess, the chief point of them all being the 'big drinks' with which he has concluded days' huntings, till good humour gets the better of good judgment, and taking the palpable hint, I allow a bigger drink than usual. And Joe is to-night more log-like than before, and more pertinacious than ever in answering all appeals to make up the fire by moving the previous question as to its present 'gootness,' till I am forced once and again to be stoker myself for the dear life, for it is no joke letting the fire out when the thermometer is twenty-five below zero.

AT THE BARRENS.

We start next morning in slightly different guise and order, Joe now making tracks, and the treboggan and its contents, and everything but guns and ammunition, being left behind in camp. About twenty minutes' walking brings us at last to the Barrens,—large desolate plains, not inaptly named after Cain,—enclosed all round by the bush, which here and there straggles into them, and exactly fulfilling the received etymology of the Latin '*saltus*,'—to wit, open spaces wherein all the beasts of the forest may leap.

Joe takes a good observation, but can at first see nothing to our advantage. We soon, however, cross a double line of tracks, which Joe feels with his hand and pronounces to be, 'last night caliboo;' so we follow them. Soon there is a large hollow beaten in the snow. 'They sleep here,' says Joe, gathering a twig which they had browsed upon, and we follow straight on. The manual scrutiny is renewed every two or three minutes, till Joe affirms them only an hour old. He is un-

able to impart his science to me, but I gather that it has to do with the hardness of the snow in the prints, and a calculation of the amount of sun and frost which have acted upon them since they were made. Joe can date a track of yesterday to an hour, to-day's to a few minutes.

Great excitement: gun cases are taken off and caps put on. 'Bery fresh track,' whispers Joe; 'caliboo bery near.' But on we go without overtaking them, till across another Barren we see them gallop off. 'No goot,' is Joe's commentary; 'too hard crust; scare caliboo;' which is intended to convey that the surface of the snow is too crisp, and our snowshoes give premature alarm by their rattle upon it. So we turn to search for other tracks, and finding some more in thick cover, give chase all the afternoon, twisting and turning in every direction. The owners of these Joe's manipulation again proclaims to be close ahead, but we cannot get within sight; and as darkness is coming on, and we are far from camp, there is nothing for it but to give them up and turn back again.

And now I see put to clearer proof that wonderful Indian instinct of finding the way. We have been meandering for hours through such dense bush that from two to ten yards all round has been our utmost extent of vision. There is no sun to guide us; very little light, and that filtered on us through the thick branches. It is open to us, as I suggest, to retrace our own tracks and get back to camp by the circuitous course of the day's march; but Joe simply says, 'I guess this ways,' and off we strike in a totally different direction; and by dint of occasional examinations of the tops of the trees, he takes us a two hours' march in a straight line to our camp, which he hits off as exactly as if he had had it in his eye as a landmark to aim at the whole distance; even as I well remember in my youthful days steering my college eight-oar at Magdalene tower, up the first reach of the Oxford race-course.

Joe thinks he has made this manoeuvre perfectly clear to me by explaining that the trees are fullest on their south side; and this,

though I can't see it myself, I can understand being visible to Indian eyes, which are microscopic or telescopic as occasion demands. But, given the south, how he knows the direction of the camp after the labyrinthine march of the day, is one of those things which pass my understanding.

I am desponding to-night, and think cariboo-hunting a delusion; and Joe makes it his business to talk me into a sounder state of mind. Joe's facts are not amusing, but his disjointed thoughts and broken English are very, especially as one finds oneself talking to him in return in the same idiomatic and figurative style of oratory, as if one were 'chaffing' a child. He tells me presently that our failure to-day is owing to our not having 'dreamt any caliboo.' 'Goot luck dream caliboo: any dream, goot luck. I out last winter—other Indians—hunt moose. One night one Indian he dream he see 'um squaw. Kill cow-moose next day. Bery goot dream that—bery goot luck. Dream 'um squaw, then always cow-moose.' 'Ah, cow-squaw, cow-moose,' I reply drowsily,—a remark which Joe appreciates hugely, and which really seems to throw a new light on his superstition.

'You dreamt any?' he asks next morning, as the hissing of the frying-pan wakes me to breakfast. I hadn't. 'Wall, I dream three caliboo. I guess see some to-day.'

As we go to the Barrens we cross a covey of Canadian partridges, which perch in the trees and wait to be shot, as is the wont of that singularly dull bird. I ask advice of Joe as to the propriety of firing so near the cariboo-ground; but he says, 'Oh, I guess caliboo not mind shoot, only man. I s'pose shoot heads off.' As our guns are loaded only with ball, this last advice is good; so we advance to a cowardly proximity, fire simultaneously, and decapitate two unsuspecting specimens. Joe hereupon makes his only joke of the week. As we lay them in our track ready to be picked up on our return, he says gravely, 'There two caliboo.' But this is a digression, and we hurry on to the Barrens.

Scarcely are we in the open coun-
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try when Joe, walking in advance, drops as if he were shot. I imitate him, and in our ambush have it explained that he sees two caliboo. After some pointing I make out two glorious auburn beasts, about the size of cows, with white beards and long white breast-hair, plodding heavily along through snow as deep as their haunches among some leafy stumps about half a mile off. We try to stalk them, availing ourselves of every shrub for cover. Joe scuds along crouching in the most wonderful manner; every joint in his body bent till he presents quite a frog-like appearance, but going as easily as if that were his favourite attitude and he were naturally deformed. I reduce my back and legs to a painfully acute and, I may add, acutely painful angle, make my big person as small as possible, and follow at his heels.

They are still a long way off, when Joe stops again—'No goot; no more sticks, no more cover; I s'pose shoot here.' And I am about to try my luck at that distance, when down he tumbles again, again followed by me, and points to a third which he has detected. It is pounding along in a direction vertical to our own, in which, if it persists, it must come near the little thicket in which we are in ambush.

The excitement is too great for human nerves. I am at the heat of 'spirits boil' with our quick crouching run, but shake all over like a jelly just put on the table. I reason

Higger-higar: higger-higar: higger-higar (*forte*).
Miramichi bootay bootay bootay . . . *ad lib.* (*diminuendo*).
Yooi Yoi (*fortissimo*).

[Pantomimic imitation of scalping.]

Higger-higar, &c. (*Da capo*.)*

I follow, both in dance and song, and to the latter add several words not found in the original Indian, till consciousness of the curious group we must form sends me rolling in the snow, powerless with laughter; and when I rise Awahwas is no more, and taciturn Joe is stoically skinning the cariboo. He has had an eye to business all along, and

with myself on the folly of this as we creep along to meet our new friend; and by the time Joe gives me his final advice, 'Behind 'um shoulder,' I am as calm again as ever.

A hundred and twenty yards distant; is it safe to creep nearer? Joe thinks so, and we sneak on.

About a hundred yards. I look at Joe for advice: his face gives no sign.

It must be little more than ninety. 'Now,' whispers Joe. I rise and fire.

The jolly big beast gives three splendid bounds high into the air from his haunch-deep footprints, and from the third falls flop, heavily, but softly, like an elephant on a feather-bed.

'Got him,' whispers Joe, and that is all our triumph at present, for the other two are still hovering near, not having seen us yet, and not caring for the crack of a rifle above the other noises of the forest. So we follow them, till cover again fails and we are forced to put up with a distant shot, which misses. They see us too now, and are off full gallop to the woods. Never mind; Joe's dream is fulfilled; we have killed our *third* cariboo.

To which we hasten back, where he lies dead and well-nigh buried. All the dormant 'Awahwas' now breaks forth in Joe, and off he starts in a dance and song of triumph round the victim, excitedly but gravely, and as if it was his duty to be excited.

there has been reason in the gravity with which he went through his wildest contortions, for our dance has beaten down the snow all round, and he has now a good hard flooring ready for his laniatorial operations.

He first takes off the head; then peels off the hide with the back of his knife as one would an orange-rind with a spoon; then disem-

* I regret that I am unable to supply a translation of this remarkable song, beyond that 'bootay' means, I grieve to say, 'brandy,' being probably connected with the French 'bouteille.' Were I to hazard a conjecture, I should say that the remainder is merely what might be freely translated 'Ri-fol-de-rol-de-riddle-dol-de-rido.'

bowels it (of enough for a mastodon); then looks up and asks whether he shall cut it up 'Indian-ways or butcher's-ways.' I choose the former, in which style he proceeds artistically to slice open the flesh and axe asunder the joints till our victim is in seven or eight large pieces. Now wherein the Indian method of dissection differs from that of the butcher, I am not sufficiently in the mysteries of the shambles to explain.

When the heart is exposed, Joe dives at it, and his features expand into their only smile on record, as he holds it up to view with the bullet-hole right through it. 'Bery goot shoot,' he says, while I try to look as if it was the sort of thing I have been used to from my youth upwards. Gratifying however as it is to be able to record one instance of a smile from Joe, I am bound to add, as a physiological fact, that it has the effect of making his ugly face fifty times uglier than before, and for all those infectious properties commonly supposed to reside in smiles, is calculated to be a dead failure.

The *dissecta membra* are now lying about on the snow, which wears the appearance of white sugar burnt. Joe shoulders some of the meat and I the skin, and we trudge back to camp for the treboggan whereon to fetch the remainder, which Joe goes out again to bring home, while I lumber for the night. Our repast on his return is diversified with partridge and venison, in addition to all the other delicacies before enumerated, and my rest to-night is warmer and softer on the hide of my booty.

The next day's hunt was as barren as its scene. There was a high wind on the plain, and the whole surface of the snow was drifting to the height of from one to ten feet above the level in one wavy cloud of fine glittering powder, like a sea dried up into its component salt—a state of things more agreeable to the inner than the outer nerves of the eye. This filled up all tracks as fast as they were made, and though we found one or two, it was impossible to trace them, so we retreated early to camp.

O you who have only known snow

as the thick, moist, pudding-like substance which encumbers the ground during a few days of an English winter, and associate it with damp feet and snowballs, how little can you conceive the glories of that snow which has been pulverized by months of intense frost. Ask the sugar-refiner the difference between the coarsest brown and the finest powdered white; ask the connoisseur of snuff the distance of the 'stodgiest' Rappee from the most delicate 'Irish Blackguard'; ask the farmer the relative consistency of the mud of February and the dust of August, and you will be not a bit nearer than before to an idea of the exquisite drift on a North American prairie. Talk of damp feet! expect them on the Sahara, but not here—of snowballs! make pellets of pepper ere you hope to coagulate this. But it is impossible to describe it—go and see for yourselves.

FROM THE BARRENS.

Next morning we make a very early start, for Will Doherty is to be at our settler's at four p.m., and to have tea prepared for our arrival. So in the dark do we breakfast and in the dark take our farewell of our four days' home, leaving it, with its 'chip-loc-gwawgen,' 'loc-wei-teegen,' 'noc-tee-hagen,' and other its polysyllable culinary conveniences, with the names and uses of which Joe has made me acquainted—haply to be inhabited by some family of bears or cat-a-mounts, or possibly to be restored for their own use by a future party hunting these Barrens.

And now begins the hardest day's work that I ever went through or expect to go through. The treboggan being loaded with the venison, Joe has stitched up our luggage into the cariboo-hide; and this it is my province to haul for the fifteen miles of our march. He assures me that it is 'all same as one tleboggan,' but I do not find that its easiness of locomotion verifies the assertion.

For eleven long hours do I drag this unwieldy mass through the soft sinking snow. It is always as much as I can move—often more than I can for several minutes together, over some log higher than usual, or up some steeper incline. Then the clumsy thing, being of rotund shape,

will keep rolling over on its side, and has to be righted again with much loss of time, trouble, and temper; and my shoulders are one mass of galls and bruises from the rope, and my feet a pair of large blisters from the ice formed on the snow-shoes; and I am altogether completely dead beaten before half our journey is over. But there is no help for it, and a feeling akin to despair keeps me on. Moreover, to add to our woes, the hide, in which our stores are enclosed, is now frozen as hard as an iron box; and though it might be wrenched open by our united prowess, could never be closed again without more fire than we have time to give it. So, food being impracticable, our only sustainer is an occasional draught of 'bootay' from our flasks, and even for this the cold makes it impossible to stop more than a minute or two at a time. Still, English despair and Dutch courage help me on, and I think no felon condemned to death ever felt the relief of his pardon much more than I felt that of first seeing the smoke from our settler's hut—earnest of the feast in store for us—curling up through the twilight.

Soon a cheery shout announces Will Doherty, and the stalwart form of that jolliest of sled-drivers is seen winding through the trees. At that sight woes, pains, and fastings are forgotten, and I break forth into song. For be it known that, *apropos* to certain of our former melodies, I have a wager with Will, who in the retirement of his native farm-house is much given to the Muses of harmony and of poesy—and the wager is a 'brandy cocktail'—to wit, that I cannot find a rhyme for the word 'Cariboo.' I solve the question, win the wager, and welcome his return, in one and the same verse, to one of our favourite airs:—

A Cariboo we've killed, as you shall learn from me and Joe at tea.

We've lots of venison for our friends: among them for Will Doherty.

The haunches both are booked, I fear; but he shall have the spare-rib, who Has come to share our luck, and help to carry back the Cariboo.

Bow wow wow, &c.

Why should I recount the feast

which follows, with the noise and laughter accompanying our different narratives of adventure; Will's being a full confession how at the ball he made it all right with his sweetheart, whose feelings he, with some sentiment, compares to the warmth of the 'tot' of tea which he is drinking?

Why recount the night's journey back to Fredericton, with its second edition of song and boisterous fun; with its ovation at the different settlements which we pass, whose inhabitants rush out clamorous with inquiries as to the sport, and congratulations at the success; with its halt at the solitary 'grog-store,' where the one brandy cocktail which I have won is succeeded by many brandy cocktails which nobody has won; with its consignment of Joe to the arms of his squaw at the door of their wigwam, after an affecting farewell, consisting, on the part of that descendant of a hundred kings, in a modest request for the remainder of my tobacco—upwards of half a pound of the choicest Latakia, irreplaceable westward of the Atlantic; with our final arrival, very weary, but very jolly, as the clocks are striking Sunday morning?

Why recount the congratulations of friends, or the gratifying sensation of distributing venison, then experienced for the first and probably for the last time? for the estates of the Linstocks do not lie in the Highlands, and where the ancient halls of our race do stand, we have long ago lost the right of 'vert and venison' once granted us, I believe, by William the Conqueror, or Julius Cæsar, or some other early monarch;—I fancy it was revoked by Nebuchadnezzar, when he took to grazing on his own account, and feared for the safety of the pastime if our well-known prowess was allowed free scope. Suffice it to say that in those halls, amid spoils from man and beast of every period, there hang the trophies of my rifle, grouped with the hunting-knife, tomahawk, and snow-shoes which assisted at their capture; to memorialize to future generations how Uncle Anaxagoras penetrated the frozen deserts of America, and slew the Cariboo of the Forest.

T. G. F.